GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
AGRICULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:4599
ANSWERED ON:25.04.2005
PERFORMANCE OF AGRICULTURE SECTOR
Satpathy Shri Tathagata

Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the performance of the agriculture sector during the Ninth Plan was much below the targeted growth;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether the Government has reviewed the situation during the Tenth Five Year Plan keeping in view the performance of Ninth Five Year Plan;

(d) if so, the steps taken by the Government in this regard;

(e) whether there are reports of hunger and malnutrition because of deceleration growth and stagnation in productivity and low purchasing capacity of sizeable portion of household;

(f) if so, the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(g) the steps taken by the Government in this regard?

Answer

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI KANTILAL BHURIA):

(a) According to the data released by the Central Statistical Organization, the average annual growth rate in agriculture, including allied sectors, in the Ninth Five Year Plan (1997-2002) was 2.1% as against the targeted growth rate of 3.9%.

(b) Since about 60 per cent of the net sown area is rain-fed, agricultural production is heavily influenced by rainfall. During the Ninth Plan period (1997-2002), the growth rate in agriculture sector was negative in two years namely, 1997-98 (-2.4%) and 2000-01 (-0.1%). The main reason for negative growth in 1997-98 was the sharp decline in rabi production of foodgrains and oilseeds. In 2000-01 also the shortfall in rabi production of foodgrains and oilseeds was quite sharp. Major reasons identified for the declaration in growth were low levels of public investment, poor infrastructure, imbalances in use of fertilizers, inadequate credit flow and poor marketing facilities.

(c) Yes, Sir.

(d) In the Tenth Five Year Plan, the focus has been laid on raising the productivity of land and water resources on a sustainable basis. Towards attaining this objective, emphasis has been laid on increased cropping intensity in agriculture. Thrust areas which have been identified for focused and priority attention include micro irrigation technology comprising drip and sprinkler irrigation, agriculture credit, horticulture with focus on backward and forward linkages, development/strengthening of agriculture marketing infrastructure, grading and standardization and agricultural research.

(e) to (g) Though there has been deceleration in growth, the stock of rice & wheat in the Central Pool has been well above the buffer norms. As regards low purchasing capacity of households, the Government has been distributing foodgrains through schemes like the Targeted Public Distribution System (TPDS) and welfare schemes aimed at employment creation and poverty alleviation. During the year 2003-04, the off-take of foodgrains (rice & wheat) from the Central Pool under the TPDS was 24.19 million tonnes compared with 20.13 million tonnes and 13.84 million tonnes in 2002-03 and 2001-02 respectively. The off take of foodgrains (rice and wheat) under Welfare schemes was 13.5 million tonnes in 2003-04 compared with 11.38 million tonnes and 7.18 million tonnes in 2002-03 and 2001-02 respectively. These schemes are supplemented by the Sampoorna Gramin Rozgar Yojana (SGRY), which provides additional wage employment as well as food security in rural areas. The foodgrains under the scheme are provided free of cost to the States. The problem of malnutrition among children is being tackled through the operation of Integrated Child Development Services (ICDS) Scheme by the Department of Women and Child Development.